

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 CU-04 BIB-01 HA-05 TRSE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8025

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 00476

BELGRADE FOR USDEL CSCE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CSCE, MT
SUBJECT: THE MALTESE HOLDOUT

REF: (A) VALLETTA 00465, (B) BELGRADE 1882

1. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER HAS SOUGHT APPOINTMENT WITH MINTOFF TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE NINE. HE WAS UNABLE TO MEET WITH MINTOFF LAST NIGHT BUT CONVEYED ESSENCE OF REPRESENTATIONS TO FOREIGN SECRETARY ABELA. LATTER TOOK HARD LINE, SAYING THAT APPOINTMENT WITH MINTOFF UNLIKELY UNTIL TODAY AT EARLIEST AND INSISTING THAT MALTESE POSITION WAS MATTER OF PRINCIPLE WITH RESPECT TO SOME EVIDENCE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF MEDITERRANEAN DOCUMENT AND FROM WHICH MALTESE WOULD NOT BUDGE. FAILURE TO DO SO WOULD IN EFFECT BE A STEP BACK FROM HELSINKI, WHEREAS IN GENERAL EUROPEAN SECURITY AREA THERE HAD AT LEAST BEEN SOME EVIDENCE OF IMPLEMENTATION IN TERMS OF CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES.

2. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR ALSO SAW ABELA, ON INSTRUCTIONS
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FROM ROME. ITALIANS EMPHASIZED THAT PROPOSED CONFERENCE IN MALTA, EVEN UNDER RESTRICTED MANDATE, WAS A MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR MALTA, WHICH SHOULD NOT BE JEOPARDIZED BY INSISTING ON PRINCIPLE AT THIS POINT. AGAIN ABELA WAS ADAMANT. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO ITALIAN AMBASSADOR, ABELA SEEMED PERSONALLY AT LEAST TO BE GROPING FOR SOME WAY TO COMPROMISE ON BASIS OF AT LEAST SOME REFERENCE IN WORDING

TO POLITICAL ASPECTS OF MEDITERRANEAN DOCUMENT IN A
FURTHER LANGUAGE CHANGE AFFECTING MALDATE FOR CONFERENCE.

3. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR, UNDOUBTEDLY REFLECTING HIS OWN
PROBLEMS OVER THE YEARS IN DEALING WITH MINTOFF ON POST-
1979 DIALOGUE, IS INCLINED TO THINK THAT MINTOFF WILL STOP
AT VIRTUALLY NOTHING TO HAVE HIS WAY, TO THE POINT OF
TOTAL IMPASSE AT BELGRADE. HE THINKS IT UNLIKELY MINTOFF
CAN BE BROUGHT TO ACCEPT PRESENT COMPROMISE, PREFERRING TO
REST ON HIS LAURELS AT HAVING STOOD UP FOR THE PRINCIPLE
OF MEDITERRANEAN SECURITY, THUS DEMONSTRATING TO HIS OWN
PUBLIC OPINION AND TO HIS MEDITERRANEAN NEIGHBORS,
INCLUDING ARABS, THE CONSISTENCY OF HIS POSITION REGARDING
THE MEDITERRANEAN.

4. GERMAN AMBASSADOR SEEMS MORE INCLINED TO THINK THAT
MINTOFF MAY YET BE BROUGHT AROUND, ULTIMATELY DEFENDING
HIS POSITION ALONG LINES OF MALTA NEWS EDITORIAL MARCH 4.
THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR WAS NOT AVAILABLE THIS MORNING.

5. ALL OF US ARE CONVINCED THAT MINTOFF WILL PRESS HIS
CASE UNTIL THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT. ALL OF US ARE
ALSO SKEPTICAL THAT FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS HERE WILL
HAVE MUCH EFFECT EXCEPT TO ENCOURAGE HIM TO THINK HE CAN
LOBBY ENDLESSLY TO GET HIS WAY. AS INDICATED ABOVE,
THERE IS SOME DIVISION OF OPINION AS TO HOW FAR HE WILL
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CARRY HIS WRECKING OPERATION ON BEHALF OF HIS PRINCIPLE.

6. NONE OF US HERE IS SUFFICIENTLY KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THE
TACTICAL AND DOCTRINAL ASPECTS OF THE COMPLEX CSCE PROCESS
TO MAKE VERY SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS, EITHER ON POSSIBLE
AMENDMENTS OF THE PRESENT COMPROMISE LANGUAGE TO MEET THE
POINT MADE BY ABELA OR TO SPECULATE VERY INTELLIGENTLY
ON THE COSTS OF HOLDING THE LINE AGAINST MINTOFF TO THE
POINT OF HAVING NO CONCLUDING STATEMENT OF ANY KIND BEYOND
A COMMITMENT TO MEET AGAIN IN MADRID, I TOLD MY COLLEAGUES
HOWEVER THAT I WAS PERSONALLY ATTRACTED BY THE GOLDBERG
SUGGESTION (PARA 4 BELGRADE REFTTEL) TO GIVE
FINAL SPEECHES IN CLOSED PLENARY AND ESCHEW FORMAL
ADOPTION OF A CONCLUDING DOCUMENT IF THE MALTESE PERSIST.
IF WE CAN LIVE WITH NO DOCUMENT AND IF WORD REACHES
MINTOFF THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO DO SO THUS CAUSING THE
MALTESE TO RUN THE RISK OF LOSING EVERYTHING IT IS
CONCEIVABLE THEY MIGHT COME AROUND. IF THEY DO NOT AND
AS A RESULT THERE IS NO CONCLUDING DOCUMENT, THEN THE
MALTESE WILL BE LEFT TO TOUT WHAT THEY CAN WITH THEIR
STAND ON BEHALF OF PRINCIPLE. BUT THAT WOULD SEEM A GOOD
DEAL LESS NOURISHING FOR THEM IN THE LONG RUN THAN WHAT

THEY COULD DO WITH A HALF-LOAF NOW.

7. BUT, AS MY MORE EXPERIENCED ITALIAN COLLEAGUE REMINDS
ME, THAT IS WHERE LOGIC ENDS AND THE PECULIAR
MINTOFF MENTALITY SETS IN. THE LATTER IS WHAT WE MUST
DEAL WITH. LAINGEN

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